

### **Amendments to the Claims**

Please **cancel claims 1-3** without prejudice.

Please **add claims 4-6** as follows:

4. (New) A system for identifying and protecting assets, the system comprising:  
a central register comprising:  
an assets database configured to store registered assets; and  
a protection elements database operatively connected to the assets database  
and configured to store a plurality of protection elements, wherein said  
protection elements comprise at least one of an encapsulated microchip  
and an identification microdot;  
a plurality of registration terminals operatively connected to the protection elements  
database, each of said registration terminals configured to retrieve one or more  
protection elements from the protection elements database and to register a  
selected asset by applying the one or more retrieved protection elements to one  
or more locations associated with the selected asset; and  
a plurality of verification terminals accessible by authorized personnel and operatively  
connected to the assets database, said verification terminals configured to  
search the assets database for an input protection element.
5. (New) The system of claim 4 wherein each verification terminal includes a protection  
element reader configured to read the input protection element.

6. (New) The system of claim 4 wherein each registration terminal includes application equipment configured to apply the retrieved protection element to the one or more locations associated with the selected asset.